WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus comprising:

a) input means for inputting variable length packet data including packet length information indicative of a packet length and encoded information data, and identification flag information for identifying said packet length information;

b) judgment means for distinguishing the packet length information included in said packet data in accordance with said identification flag information, and judging the packet length of said packet data;

c) packet generating means for generating said variable length packet data into fixed length packet data in accordance with an output of said judgment means, and transmitting the fixed length packet data.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

clock reference information generating means for generating clock reference information for use in a time reference during decoding of said encoded information data,

wherein said packet generating means transmits at least one fixed length packet data provided with the clock reference information generated by said clock reference information generating means within a

predetermined time interval.

3. An apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

program specific information generating means for generating program specific information indicative of a program specific of a packet to be transmitted,

wherein said packet generating means transmits at least one fixed length packet data provided with the program specific information generated by said program specific information generating means within the predetermined time interval.

4. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said input means inputs a plurality of types of variable length packet data.

5. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said packet generating means transmits the fixed length packet data provided with said clock reference information, when no effective fixed length packet data is present.

6. An apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said packet generating means transmits the fixed length packet data provided with said program specific information, when no effective fixed length packet data

is present.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said variable length packet data is Packetized Elementary Stream (PES) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1, and said fixed length packet data is Transport Stream (TS) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

8. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said clock reference information is Program Clock Reference (PCR) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

9. An apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said program specific information is Program Specific Information (PSI) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

10. An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said information data is image data, and is encoded in conformity with ISO/IEC 13818-2.

11. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said packet generating means inserts a stuffing byte when the code length of said variable length packet data is less than the code length which can be inserted to said fixed length packet data.

12. An information processing apparatus

comprising:

a) encoding means for encoding information data, generating variable length packet data including packet length information indicative of a packet length and

5   generating identification flag information for identifying said packet length information; and

b) converting means for distinguishing the packet length information included in said packet data in accordance with the identification flag information

10   generated by said encoding means, judging the packet length of said variable length packet data, and converting said variable length packet data to fixed length packet data,

wherein said encoding means is connected to said

15   converting means via at least a data bus for transmitting said variable length packet data and a flag bus for transmitting said identification flag information.

20   13. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said encoding means comprises clock reference information generating means for generating clock reference information for use in a time reference during decoding of said encoded information data, and

25   said encoding means is connected to said converting means via a clock reference bus for transmitting said clock reference information.

14. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said converting means is connected to a plurality of said encoding means via said data bus and said flag bus which are common.

15. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said variable length packet data is Packetized Elementary Stream (PES) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1, and said fixed length packet data is Transport Stream (TS) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

16. An apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said clock reference information is Program Clock Reference (PCR) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

17. An apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said information data is image data, and is encoded in conformity with ISO/IEC 13818-2.

18. An information processing apparatus comprising:

a) first generating means for generating variable length packet data including encoded information data;

b) second generating means for generating and transmitting fixed length packet data from said variable length packet data generated by said first generating means; and

c) generating means for generating clock reference

information for use in a time reference during decoding

of said encoded information data,

wherein said second generating means generates the

5 fixed length packet data including said clock reference

information and transmits the fixed length packet data

within a predetermined time interval, and transmits the

fixed length packet data including said clock reference

information when there is no effective fixed length

10 packet data.

19. An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein

said variable length packet data is Packetized

Elementary Stream (PES) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1,

15 and said fixed length packet data is Transport Stream

(TS) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

20. An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein

said clock reference information is Program Clock

20 Reference (PCR) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

21. An apparatus according to claim 18, wherein

said information data is image data, and is encoded in

conformity with ISO/IEC 13818-2.

25

22. An information processing apparatus

comprising:

a) first generating means for generating variable length packet data including encoded information data;

b) second generating means for generating and transmitting fixed length packet data from said

5   variable length packet data generated by said first generating means; and

c) generating means for generating program specific information indicative of a program specific of said fixed length packet data,

10   wherein said second generating means generates the fixed length packet data including said program specific information and transmits the fixed length packet data within a predetermined time interval, and transmits the fixed length packet data including said

15   program specific information when there is no effective fixed length packet data.

23. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said variable length packet data is Packetized

20   Elementary Stream (PES) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1, and said fixed length packet data is Transport Stream (TS) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

24. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein

25   said program specific information is Program Specific Information (PSI) conforming to ISO/IEC 13818-1.

25. An apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said information data is image data, and is encoded in conformity with ISO/IEC 13818-2.

5   26. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

inputting variable length packet data including packet length information indicative of a packet length and encoded information data, and identification flag

10   information for identifying said packet length information;

distinguishing the packet length information included in said packet data in accordance with said identification flag information, and judging the packet

15   length of said packet data; and

generating said variable length packet data into fixed length packet data in accordance with said judgment result and transmitting the fixed length packet data.

20

27. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

generating variable length packet data including encoded information data;

25   generating and transmitting fixed length packet data from said generated variable length packet data; and

generating clock reference information for use in a time reference during decoding of said encoded information data,

wherein said fixed length packet generating step
5   includes a step of generating the fixed length packet data including said clock reference information and transmitting the fixed length packet data within a predetermined time interval, and a step of transmitting the fixed length packet data including said clock
10   reference information when there is no effective fixed length packet data.

28. An information processing method comprising the steps of:
15   generating variable length packet data including encoded information data;

generating and transmitting fixed length packet data from said generated variable length packet data; and

20   generating program specific information indicative of a program specific of said fixed length packet data,

wherein said fixed length packet data generating step includes a step of generating the fixed length packet data including said program specific information
25   and a step of transmitting the fixed length packet data within a predetermined time interval, and a step of transmitting the fixed length packet data including

said program specific information when there is no effective fixed length packet data.

29. A storage medium in which an information processing program according to claim 26 is stored and which can be read by a computer.

30. A storage medium in which an information processing program according to claim 27 is stored and which can be read by a computer.

31. A storage medium in which an information processing program according to claim 28 is stored and which can be read by a computer.